

of divinity students.

This course requires 12-15 hours of community service. Students are organized into small groups and meet weekly to create a covenant with one another about their spiritual practices. Students are also required to write four reflection papers and participate in five in-class reflections. Students were given four assignments which directed them to reflect theologically on their experiences at their service sites. These reflective writings serve as the basis of our findings. We undertook a content analysis of their writings and distilled a number of themes described below.

Students' increasing awareness of community and its impacts on ministry were evident throughout the semester. Additionally, students were able to empathize with diverse people and increased their sensitivity in understanding how people come to be in situations of hardship. Students also developed a heightened understanding of the relationship between service and justice. Many students initially saw themselves as being powerful, having gifts and resources, and being responsible for changing the lives of others. By the end of the semester, many realized the limitations of their own power and discovered the assets of the community. Finally, students began to see themselves as agents of God's good works and as recipients of God's grace. For us, this is the most successful area of development in our students' understanding of the presence of God.

References

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